TV history by the slice

Cable's new season has everything on it

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The assassination of President John F. Kennedy transformed television news coverage, made Dan Rather a star and demonstrated to the nation once and for all the awesome power of that box in the corner of the living room.

As Kennedy died, so did a piece of America's heart. And television was there to help us grieve.

On Nov. 22 — the 25th anniversary of the assassination — cable's A&E will recapture the past by rebroadcasting 4½ uninterrupted hours of NBC's news coverage of that tragic day.

That cablecast is just one of many cable shows in the upcoming season that have been lifted from the history books and news- [illegible] Also on tap: movies or minis on the revolution in the Philippines, the Zodiac murders in California and Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal. On the lighter side, there's even an irreverent musical comedy miniseries on television evangelists.

Edwin Newman, part of the NBC news team the day Kennedy was shot in Dallas, will host A&E's "JFK: As It Happened," beginning at 1:56 p.m. EST — the exact moment NBC broke into its schedule with news of the shooting. After the NBC rebroadcast, there will be a 90-minute condensation of the news coverage, for a total of six commercial-free hours.

HBO will pay tribute to the anniversary with "JFK: In His Own Words," a documentary that includes never-before-seen footage of the president, interviews with family and friends and voice-overs of the late president's actual words.

Rocketing forward in time, HBO will also handle the 1986 "people power" revolution in the Philippines with a six-hour miniseries filmed on location in Manila, with additional photography in Australia and Sri Lanka. "A Dangerous Life" stars Gary Busey as an American television journalist covering the revolt.

The other HBO miniseries on tap is "Glory Glory," slated for early 1989, about TV evangelism. It stars Richard Thomas as evangelist Bobby Joe and Ellen Greene as Sister Ruth, a down-and-out rock 'n' roll singer who accepts a job crooning for the Church of the Companions of Christ.

HBO also has secured permission from Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal to film his life story. "Murderers Among Us: The Simon Wiesenthal Story" stars Oscar winner Ben Kingsley in the title role, from Wiesenthal's liberation at a concentration camp through the trials of such legendary Nazis as Adolf Eichmann and Franz Murer.

Showtime also takes a look at World War II with "Souvenir," premiering Oct. 30. The two-hour movie stars Christopher Plummer as an ex-German soldier, now an American citizen, who returns to a small French city to look for his former lover.

For the musically inclined, Showtime has "That's What Friends Are For: AIDS Concert '88" on Oct. 8. The benefit concert at the Kennedy Center features songs from Elton John, Dionne Warwick and others. Cinemax will do "Cinemax Sessions: Les Paul: He Changed the Music," plus vintage performances with never-before-seen footage from John Lennon (October), Jimi Hendrix (November) and Jim Morrison (December).

Then there's comedy. "It's Garry Shandling's Show," Showtime's critically acclaimed sitcom, arrives Oct. 21 with new episodes, and in November, Showtime will air "Second City's 15th Anniver-

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